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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: KARZAI REGISTERS FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

¶1. President Karzai officially registered as a candidate for the Aug. 20 presidential election this morning (May 4), moments before departing for the trilateral meetings in Washington. Karzai registered with Marshall Mohammed Qasim Fahim Khan and Karim Khalili as his first and second vice presidents, respectively. An official with the Independent Election Commission confirmed that Karzai's registration paperwork was complete.

¶2. Karzai is the third official entrant into the presidential race, though several dozen other potential candidates have expressed interest in running. Shanwaz Tanai (leader of the failed 1990 coup) and Akbar Bai (an ethnic Turkmen and rival to Afghan Uzbek warlord Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum) are the other two, though neither appears capable of attracting significant support. Sources close to former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah and Lower House Deputy Speaker Mirwais Yaseni said those candidates would register today or tomorrow. An aide to former Interior Minister Ali Ahmed Jalali said Jalali had decided not to register for the election and had ended his campaign. Other major rumored challengers have kept quiet regarding their intentions, despite just four days remaining before the registration deadline. Two minor potential candidates with American citizenship have contacted the Embassy with questions concerning renunciation of their citizenship.
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